

DETAILS

Newsletter published by The OSCE Mission in Kosovo

SPECIAL EDITION - May-June, 2004

Everybody should give their maximum to fulfill the Standards

Interview with PM Bajram Rexhepi

Kosovo Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi expresses optimism that standards can be met. He says the people of Kosovo can help this process that will result in a better life for all.

by Edita Buçaj, OSCE

Details: Mr. Prime Minister, from Kosovo's government point of view, how much are local institutions able to meet standards set by the international community?

PM Rexhepi: Standards set by the international community aim at a continuous improvement of local institutions. We have said since the beginning that standards are necessary and local institutions are committed to fulfill them. I have said since the beginning that standards can be met to a considerable extent and that everybody should give their maximum in fulfilling them. We must always bear in mind that our institutions are the first ones elected by the free vote of the people, but have such a function for the first time and this has to be taken into consideration.

Details: How will they (institutions) be evaluated for the work they have done, bearing in mind that we're getting closer to elections and the campaign might take a part of their energy?



"All standards have their challenges, however, the standard on return is the most delicate one..." says Kosovo Prime Minister Bajram Rexhepi.

PM Rexhepi: I cannot talk on behalf of all institutions, but I talk in particular on behalf on the government. After discussing the necessity of standards, we have reached an agreement that the functioning of the government as such will continue until the elections. The electoral campaign will start and develop and there will be commitment in it, however, the institutional work must continue and it will continue until elections.

Details: Which is the most difficult standard to meet and why?

PM Rexhepi: All standards have their challenges, however, the standard on return is the most delicate one, since besides conditions that have to be met in Kosovo for the

return, it also takes the will of the communities to return. The standard on economy is a standard with special importance for the overall economic development of Kosovo. There has been no progress in the economic development in Kosovo; on the contrary, there has been stagnation for a long time.

Details: How much does the non-participation of Serbs in this process make the fulfilling of the standards difficult?

PM Rexhepi: The non-participation of the Serb community in Kosovo has been problematic since the beginning of the process of the standards. Such an abstention is harmful for everybody in Kosovo and above all, for the Serb community. In order to review the issues that burden this community and other communities, they have to be part of the process. However, there is still time and possibility for involvement of the Serb community in this process and we hope that after what happened in Kosovo it has been evaluated that there is a need for a real dialogue between communities in Kosovo.

Details: Does the claim that standards set by the international community aim to prolong the solution of Kosovo's status stand or are the standards on the contrary really the way towards Europe?

PM Rexhepi: Not only Kosovo without a defined final status has standards to meet, other countries with defined status, which aim at the European integration have standards too. Standards for Kosovo are only the first step towards European integration. Meeting the standards must be seen as something that contributes directly to the realization of the status according to people's will, Kosovo's closer approach to the European Union and making Kosovo a functional and democratic place.

(For more on PM Rexhepi: www.pm-ksgov.net)

IN THIS ISSUE:

What is the first Standard all about pg. 3

Augustin Palokaj on Standards and media pg. 4-5

Locals run 2004 election pg. 7

No democracy without strong Local government pg. 8

osce

Let's talk about Kosovo

Over the next eight weeks UNMiK and the Office of the Prime Minister are involved in an information campaign to increase awareness of the "Standards for Kosovo". Week 1 is devoted to the first standard - functioning democratic institutions. This special edition of Details, the newsletter published by the OSCE Mission in Kosovo as the Institution Building Pillar, is devoted to further describing this standard in words and concepts all can understand.



Dear Details readers,

The most important and probably the most difficult steps in Kosovo's development are in front of you. The Standards Implementation Plan – a partnership between the PISG and UNMiK – presented at the end of March of this year envisages the path the people of Kosovo should take in order to become part of the European family.

Progress in the standards is important not only because it will mark the begin-



ning of the consideration of Kosovo's final status, but mainly because it will mean the improvement of every aspect of life for all in Kosovo. It requires the firm commitment and continuous efforts of all levels of society, including the local institutions, the civil society, the media, as well as every individual. Implementation of the Standards should be both an individual and collective effort, in order to succeed.

At this stage, Kosovo's institutions and society as a whole can continue to count on the support of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo. We are ready to offer advice and assist in building and strengthening essential capacities of the institutions to become more transparent, efficient and representative of all communities, of the civil society to play a more effective balancing role in everyday life, of the youth to build a prosperous and peaceful future for Kosovo. This is a genuine partnership for all who are and who want to be involved in this process of turning Kosovo into a better place.

We do have the same goals for Kosovo as Kosovo has for itself, and the Standards are the proof of that. But at the end of this implementation process you, the people of Kosovo, will be the only real owners of the Standards, you, the people of Kosovo, will be the only real beneficiaries of them.

Ambassador Pascal Fieschi
OSCE Mission in Kosovo
DSRSG for Institution Building

DETAILS

Newsletter published by The OSCE

OSCE HQ, 38000 Prishtinë / Priština Tel (+381-38) 500 162

Fax: (+381-38) 500 188

E-mail: osce-kosovo@omik.org

Publisher:

Sven Lindholm

Managing Editor:

Arni Snaevarr

Senior Editors:

Hasan Sopa (Detaje), Slavisa Mladenović (Detalji)

Layout & drawings:

Shpend Kada

Contributors:

Edita Buçaj, Ardiana Gashi, Biserka Ivanovic,
Karin Marmosler, Adnan Merovci, Augustin Palokaj,
Hartmut Puerner, Besnik Tahiri Fatime Lepaja,
Rexhep Krasniqi, Halide Sadiku, Mevlyde Salihu,
Ardiana Sejdiu

OSCE

Mission in Kosovo

Disclaimer:

The views expressed and the presentation of the material published do not necessarily represent the policies, opinions or positions of the OSCE Mission in Kosovo.

What is the first Standard all about?

“A Kosovo where all – regardless of ethnic background, race or religion – are free to live, work and travel without fear, hostility or danger and where there is tolerance, justice and peace for everyone.”

by Arni Snaevarr, OSCE

Building functioning democratic institutions is the first and, without question, one of the most important Standards for Kosovo. The UN Security Council on 30 April reiterated its support for the Standards process, which requires eight Standards to be achieved before Kosovo’s final status can be decided. The Kosovo Standard Implementation Plan, which was launched earlier this year, is a roadmap to guide this process. The Standard that deals with functioning democratic institutions includes provisions on the holding of free and fair elections, fostering the PISG’s democratic underpinnings, and promoting a responsible and professional media.

One of the main objectives of the Standards process is to provide Kosovo with the institutions and laws that would bring it closer to Europe.

Elections

But what does it mean to have “functioning democratic institutions”? Electing a legislature and the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) in free, fair and democratic elections is obviously very important. Indeed this year a local institution, the Central Election Commission, will take over responsibility for the holding of elections for the first time since 1999. In the past five years, the three elections in Kosovo have been almost exclusively international (OSCE) undertakings.

But however important elections are, holding them is not enough to create a functioning democratic society.

All communities served and represented

One of the basic principles of a democratic government is that all communities are involved in the decision-making process in a meaningful way. To fulfill the standard “Functioning democratic institutions” the PISG must make sure that all communities are proportionately represented at all levels of the PISG. All official languages should be respected throughout the institutions of government and basic public services, such as health care, utilities and education, should without discrimination, be available to all communities in Kosovo.



The goal of the Standards is a democratic, elected government....representing the interest of all Kosovo’s communities.

The demand for parallel structures should be reduced by increasing the provision of services to all and should eventually be dismantled or integrated into PISG structures.

The civil service must be professional, impartial and accountable, representative of all communities in Kosovo and include a significant proportion of women. A goal of the Standards is for women to participate in the institutions of the PISG at rates that equal or exceed rates in the region and the interests of women are fully reflected in its policies and legislation.

The PISG and local municipal governments decide and enact legislation in an open, accountable and democratic manner. Codes of conduct and enforcement procedures should exist to provide for transparent and accountable government.

To summarize: the goal of the Standards is a democratic, elected government administering in an impartial, transparent and accountable manner, representing the interest and needs of all Kosovo’s communities in all institutions of government.

Media and Civil Society

The Standards highlight the importance of

both a free and independent media and civil society in a democratic society.

In a democratic Kosovo a range of private, independent print and broadcast media should exist providing access to information for all communities. An independent and effective media regulatory authority should be created and hate speech or any form of incitement should be condemned by political leaders, the media regulatory authority and media commentators. Publicly-funded media should devote a fair share of its resources and output to all ethnic communities.

Civil society plays an important and influential role in voicing citizens’ interests and concerns before government. Civil society can work effectively as critical and supportive partners to the institutions of government in Kosovo - including the Assembly of Kosovo and the PISG, municipal authorities and the civil administration.

The Standards acknowledge the importance of non-governmental organizations, in particular those representing minorities. They should be able to operate freely within the law and individuals free to join them without discrimination.



Standards in media should be separated from politics, therefore from the standards for status too

Everybody has a wrong approach anytime minorities and media in Kosovo are mentioned, by limiting the debate with informing in their own language. The problem in Kosovo is that there is not much reporting in the majority language about problems of the minorities, whereas the minority language media, even after five years, do not write what happened to the majority during Milosevic's regime.

by: Augustin Palokaj, journalist, Koha Ditore

Even though the media in Kosovo, as media in any other place in the world, reflects the situation of the society on the one hand and shapes the opinion of the same society on the other, any conditioning of a political solution with the situation of the media is politicizing. Therefore, mentioning the role of media in the standards, which should be met before solving the status of Kosovo, is controversial.

In the developed world, from whom Kosovo wants to learn, and whose officials want to pass on their experience to Kosovo, media tend separate themselves from politics, and to be as independent and free in their comments as possible. They often are a reflection of the society, because their role is to reflect what happens, but they also have an educational and emancipating role. Nevertheless, there are some issues about media that should be taken into consideration in the political agenda set for Kosovo, known as "Standards before status" and their implementation plan. These issues have nothing to do with the request that comments in the media should contain a multiethnic spirit, because no one has the right to tell how the comments should be since they are supposed to be free, but they have to do with some preconditions that would help in structuring the media, which is a big problem in Kosovo.

It would be ridiculous if one day an international official would say "Kosovo does not deserve to have its status solved because some of the media make unacceptable comments."

The situation in the Kosovo media is more complex. First of all, one should not talk in plural about the "Kosovo Media", even if the international community often makes this mistake by putting them all in the same bag. It is obvious to everyone who can read the regional media that there are media in Kosovo which are more advanced in terms of professionalism than media in other countries of the region, as there are media whose reports are simply primitive, because the word unprofessional would be too soft to describe them. The media are as



"As the situation stands now, there is a conflict of generations in the Kosovo media, though the differences are more a question of experience and the mentality point of view rather than age."

they are because such is the society, in other word they are politicized and dependent on different interest groups, often political parties. As far as this is concerned, Kosovo is not a phenomenon, because ever since the existence of the media and politicians, the later try to influence the former as much as they can.

As the situation stands now, there is a conflict of generations in the Kosovo media, though the differences are more a question of experience and the mentality point of view rather than age. A new generation of journalists, with an extensive experience, often from working with international journalists during the crisis and the war in Kosovo, who speak foreign languages and have knowledge in new technology, are already carrying a heavy burden in Kosovo journalism. This generation, who were deprived of the opportunity to study during the Milosevic regime, lacks a certain level of systematic education, and should compensate it now. The older generation

of journalists, dismissed from work during the 1980s and jobless for more than ten years, find it difficult to manage in the new political, social and technological circumstances, since their experience is based on times when the journalist was perceived as a socio-political employee. These two generations, each having a kind of a handicap because of the circumstances, not because of their fault, coexist in the Kosovo scene.

This is a phenomenon that nobody in Kosovo has dealt with seriously. If this was taken seriously, then it would have been clear that mistakes in the Kosovo media are not intentional but more a result of the lack of knowledge. Some journalists find it difficult, even today, to separate their work of a journalist from the task of a politician, and this is how the public opinion perceives them. Therefore, in most of the cases, we have servility towards politics and non-critical protocol journalism. Unfortunately, the international administration in Kosovo prefers such journalism also, being inter-

ested to avoid criticism about its work.

The mistake of the international community in its approach in Kosovo since the beginning is that it sees everything from the interethnic angle, not understanding the phenomenon of professional development of the media. On the other hand, the lack of journalists' readiness to grasp the sense of professional responsibility through their codes of conduct of their own associations leaves room to the others to deal with journalistic ethics.

It is true that Kosovo cannot move forward as long as it does not show that it has a developed and tolerant society, especially towards minorities, as it is also true that media can play a crucial role in creating this tolerance. Everybody uses a wrong approach when minorities and the Kosovo media are mentioned, by limiting the debate with informing in their own language. The problem in Kosovo is that there is not much reporting in the majority language about problems of the minorities, whereas the minority language media, even after five years, do not write what happened to the majority during Milosevic's regime. It is difficult to find a report in Albanian language about daily problems of the Serb Community in Gorazhdec/Goraždevac enclave, who live in a ghetto. Serbs, on the other hand, are informed by Belgrade media, which are for the most part biased and have prejudices towards Albanians, what was emphasized in analyses of some civic organizations in Serbia. Being interested only in having as many media as possible for minorities in their language and leaving aside their content of what and how much is being reported in one's language about the problems of the others, helps, intentionally or not, new ethnical segregation in Kosovo.

There is progress in media development and professionalism in Kosovo, and journalists' awareness is increasing. But conditions for the development of professional, critical and free media are too poor in Kosovo. Something that could be required unconditionally from Kosovo media is more responsibility for their work. If this responsibility cannot be ensured by professionalism, than it should be sanctioned by law, though this should be the last tool, and laws are not compiled by journalists.

"It is difficult to find a report in Albanian language about daily problems of the Serb Community... Serbs, on the other hand, are informed by Belgrade media, which are for the most part biased and have prejudices towards Albanians."

Photos: Kotek/OSCE



Elections according to Standard number one

By Ardiana Gashi and Karin Marmsoler

Elections

- Elections are regular, transparent, free and fair, conforming to international standards, allowing the full and peaceful participation of all communities and ethnic groups.
- Internally-displaced persons and refugees continue to be fully included in the Kosovo election process and their ability to vote is facilitated.
- An independent, representative and multi-ethnic Central Election Commission administers elections.
- A range of democratic political parties contests elections.
- A comprehensive legal framework covering political party operation and finances is adopted and enforced.

Organizing and supervising elections is one of the most important tasks mandated to the OSCE Mission in Kosovo and more specifically to its Department of Elections. Three elections, two municipal and one Kosovo Assembly, have taken place since the establishment of the OSCE Mission in 1999. From a legal point of view these elections were conducted by the Central Election Commission, but it was the OSCE's role to administer all operational aspects of the election cycle. International and national observers, including representatives from the Council of Europe and the European Parliament, recognized all three elections as complying with international standards for transparent, free and fair elections.

For the 2004 Assembly elections, the OSCE Mission is undertaking its election responsibilities with a significant change from previous election years. The operational activities are shared with a new local election management body, the Central Election Commission Secretariat (CECS), which is a non-political and technical authority. In the future, the CECS is expected to take over the entire election operation. The current experience, in which the OSCE and CECS are collaborating in a close partnership, aims at guaranteeing a sustainable and democratic election management in Kosovo.

A key aspect of democratic elections and hence of Standard No. 1 consists in the inclusiveness and participation of all voter communities, in- and outside of Kosovo. In previous elections, the OSCE Mission has provided all Kosovo's refugees and per-

sons displaced with the opportunity to cast their vote either by mail or, as in Serbia and Montenegro, by in-person voting. In this year's elections, the By-mail Operation will cover all out-of Kosovo voting, including Serbia and Montenegro. To supply all out-of Kosovo voters with adequate information on how to cast their vote, an extensive public information campaign, run by the OSCE, will be implemented.

According to the new UNMIK Regulation 2004/11, political parties are required to adhere to a number of obligations in order to increase internal democracy and transparency.

The Regulation requires party statutes to provide minimal standards for internal party democracy that include the democratic participation of the members of the party in the selection of electoral candidates of the Party for both the Central Assembly and the Municipal Assembly elections. Political parties' statutes must reflect the procedures by which members of the public would become or cease to be members of the Party as well as the rights and responsibilities of party members. The statutes must also include the decision making process on amending the statute or political party programme and the dissolution of the Party. A political party will have to provide procedures on the internal election of the Party President, the members

of the highest executive body or any other elected official of the Party. Among other issues a political party will have to create a body that will serve as a mechanism to resolve internal Party disputes that relate to the interpretation of the Party statute.

Political parties

All currently registered political parties must adopt a Statute that complies with the above noted requirements by June 30, 2004. Meanwhile, those political parties that have not elected their presidents and highest executive body must do so before July 15, 2004 at a general Assembly session.

Furthermore, the new Regulation introduces a new system of financial reporting and record keeping similar to what exists in many European systems.

Each registered Political Party is now required to record and disclose all contributions in excess of 100 Euro. No individual may give more than 20,000 Euro to a party in any calendar year. Each registered Political Party shall not accept an indirect contribution made through an individual from the money, property or services of a third party. A Political Party will be required to submit a detailed financial report every six months beginning on September 1, 2004. The report will require parties to disclose all of their income, expenses, assets and liabilities.



The collaboration between CECS and OSCE in the 2004 Assembly elections is a step toward a sustainable and democratic election management in Kosovo

Fulfilling a Standard, locals run 2004 elections

by: Adnan Merovci, Chief Executive, CECS

The Central Election Commission Secretariat (CECS) was created at the end of 2003, as a local elections management body with a permanent status, independent of political forces and influences.

The CECS is an operational body of the Central Elections Commission (CEC) and is responsible for developing, organizing and implementing free, fair and transparent elections in accordance with the international standards, ensuring that all eligible voters have the right to vote.

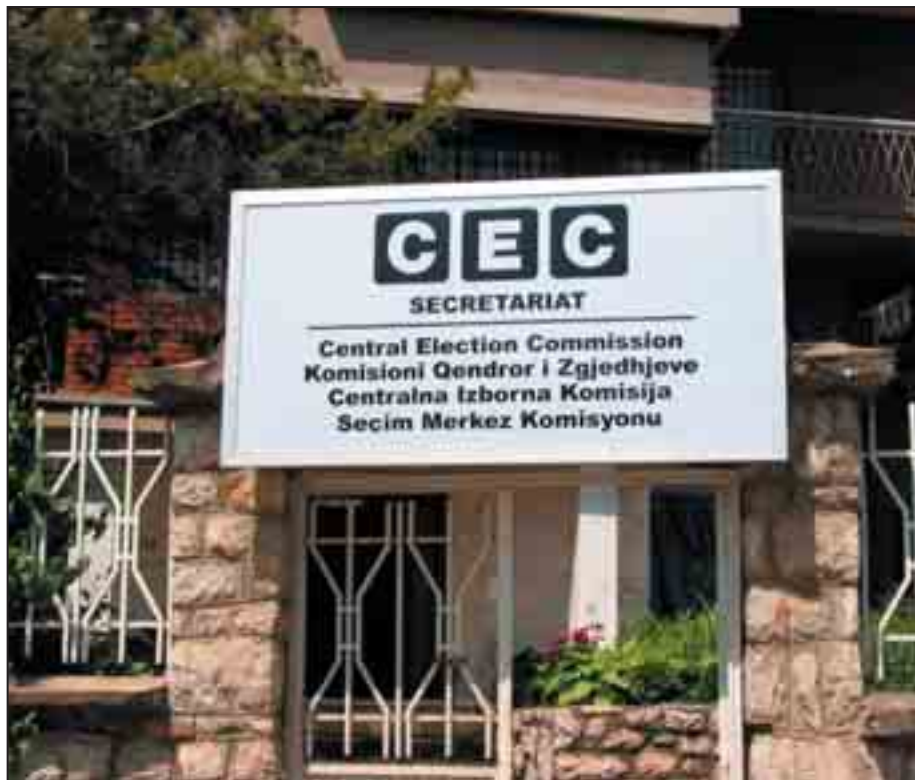
Elections to the Kosovo Assembly will be held in October 2004 and for the first time they will be managed by locals. The Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe (OSCE), within the operations carried by CECS, will have a monitoring and advising role.

More precisely, CECS will be responsible for the setting up of polling stations and all other operations that will take place in the field on election day. This will be achieved in close co-operation with the Municipal Election Commissions (MEC) and the full support of municipal authorities.

The MECs are coordinated and led by the Municipal Election Commission's Executive Officer, will conduct election activities in Polling Centres and Polling Stations of their Municipalities. The Municipal Administrations will actively support and help the MECs with human resources, materials and logistics.

In order to implement the election operations the CECS will closely cooperate with The Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) the Ministries of Public Services, Education, and Finance. Also it will have a close cooperation with the Office of the Prime Minister for an extensive public information campaign. There have already been established first contacts with the PISG and a high level of understanding, cooperation and support has been reached.

The capacity to hold democratic elections is one of the requirements of the first Standard for Kosovo. The CECS is included in the plan for the Implementation of Standards. This encourages us even more to be creative



Elections 2004 are the first organized by the locals.

and professional in our work.

A special emphasis should be put on the inclusion of all ethnicities in this year elections. This will be achieved only by hard work. Our strategy is based on the creation of a trustful environment with our work so that all voters are encouraged to cast their vote. The multi-ethnicity of the CECS staff as well as a proper and efficient public information campaign will also help to achieve this goal. Furthermore, the CECS will be trained and supported by the Election Department of the OSCE. The co-operation between the CECS and the OSCE was, is and always will be the motto of our common strategy in achieving our goals.

The CECS has a permanent staff of about 20 at the central level in Prishtinë / Priština and about 30 Executive Elections Municipal Officers, stationed in the different municipalities. Short term staff has also been hired for the election period. All the employees, permanent as well as the temporary, are subject to the Civil Service Regulation of Kosovo.

The CECS is financed by the Kosovo consolidated budget. It is chaired by the Executive Chairperson and his Deputy.

For this year's elections, CECS is responsible for the following elections activities:

- Certification of Political Entities and Independent Candidates,
- Training of Municipal staff for Polling Stations,
- Polling Centre Management,
- Safe-keeping and distribution of election materials,
- Ballot production,
- Public Information,
- Programs for accreditation of domestic and international observers,
- Conduct of In Kosovo electoral activities.

OSCE will continue to have a monitoring and consulting role in all the above mentioned operations.



No democracy without strong local government

Hartmut Puerner, OSCE

Democratic local self-government is one of the cornerstones of European Democracy. While buildings like the Houses of Parliament on the river Thames in London are some of the most well-known symbols of democracy in Europe and are known all over the world, most of the daily life issues of the citizens are actually dealt with in thousands of less spectacular buildings, Europe's "Town halls", "Mairies" and "Rathaeuser". As much as parliaments, governments and ministries democratically decide on national issues, municipal assemblies, mayors and civil servants take care of the immediate living environment of the citizens. Many of the municipal assembly buildings are themselves nowadays not only functioning local government buildings, but historic monuments in their own right, very often dating centuries back.

The idea that the inhabitants of a city, town or village know best how to take care of the immediate concerns in their environment is centuries old in Europe, and many different regional traditions exist. But nowadays, there is a consensus in Europe, that

without a strong local self-government as a basis, democratic institutions cannot exist. A concept for this idea has been defined in the European Charter of local Self-Government.

The concept is "the principle of subsidiarity", which means that government should always act at the lowest possible level. European experience shows that this provides for reasonable decisions and active engagement of citizens. If a matter is discussed among those who are most directly concerned, not only is it most likely that the most knowledgeable people on the issue will be involved in the decision making, but it also safeguards, that the motivation to come to a good solution is the highest. Those directly involved in the decision making will then also directly benefit from a good decision. Or have to carry the bad consequences of a folly, or, often worse, no decision being taken at all.

But, it has also been proven, that a functioning democratic local self-government is for the benefit of a society as a whole. Functioning local self-government makes it superfluous to pore over millions of local

problems in huge expensive government buildings in far away centres, because the problems are being taken care off by the local population themselves. At the end of the day, a state with a good system of local self-government is an effective state.

Even more, it is today generally acknowledged that local politics is the cradle of great statesman and nation-wide political party and civil society leaders. It is especially a testing ground for young leaders and politicians. Who is capable to listen to his immediate fellow citizens, who shows the talent to convince his next door neighbors of a good idea, somebody who successfully exposes himself to a local political debate, a person who can well organize a local project, might learn in the process how to democratically run a region or a country. He might, there is no guarantee. But who has never tried to get things working in front of his front door, taking responsibility for a couple of hundred or thousand people, is more likely than not doomed to failure when he takes up office on a higher level. Almost all successful leaders in the Western World started politics in a town or district hall, as heads of local associations or clubs.

The Convention in which these principles have been enshrined for the members of the European Union and the Council of Europe is the Council of Europe "Charter of Local Self-Government". While respecting the different local traditions, the signatories nevertheless signed up to the successful principle to have as many government functions as possible be exerted on local level and to have this local level as close to the people as possible. And to involve the local population as much as possible.

The Standards for Kosovo, prescribe nothing else than to bring the provisions of the European "Charter of Local-Self Government" to Kosovo. In the Chapter "Functioning Democratic Institutions" of the Standards, it is made clear that "All communities are proportionately represented at all levels of the ...The PISG and Local Municipal Government decide and enact legislation in an open, accountable and democratic manner."

This means, that Kosovo's municipalities should have the responsibility to ensure



"The idea that the inhabitants of a city, town or village know best how to take care of the immediate concerns in their environment is centuries old in Europe."

that all inhabitants, regardless their mother tongue can without discrimination participate in the decision making on local affairs, not only through elected officials, but also through their personal engagement.

In spring 2004, Kosovo took the first steps in this direction, but there is a long way to go. The clouds of the past hang heavily and threaten also to blacken the future. The local Provisional Institutions of Self-Governments are there, but the spirit is missing. The territorial lay-out of Kosovo municipalities is still the same as under the regime of Socialist Yugoslavia, drawn along the theories of the socialist ideologist Edvard Kardelj . This makes them entities of 80.000 inhabitants on average, twenty times bigger than in Central Europe. This makes it difficult to create a close relationship between inhabitants and municipal office holders, which provides for effective decisions and good services. For this reason, the Standards strongly advise to study and possibly implement the report on reform of local self-government drafted by the recent Council of Europe Decentralisation mission. A mission of the very institution that considers themselves the guardians of local democracy in Europe.

The members of Municipal Assemblies as well as civil servants, too often still regard themselves as representatives of their political parties led by powerful leaders, rather than engaged advocates of their neighbors' wishes and interests. This is also a legacy of socialist times. The man in the street feels too often ignored when politicians are entangling themselves into endless discussions on seats and posts, and out-maneuvering each other. And when issues of his concern are being discussed this too often still happens in closed circles behind closed doors. It is a consequence of an unhealthy mixture of the heritage of the former socialist regime on the one hand, and the now outdated habits of secrecy on the other hand.

Kosovo's towns and villages are supposed to be the home of all Kosovo's inhabitants. Minorities can only participate freely and fully in the local democracy and the local services if an environment has been created where everyone's language can freely be used and all communities are fairly represented in the municipal structures. As a consequence the Standards emphasize the free public usage of all official languages and fair representation of all communities at all levels and indiscriminate provision of municipal services. This does not give undue privileges to anybody. This only secures that in a traditionally multi-lingual society every member may read and



"The Standards emphasize the free public usage of all official languages and fair representation of all communities at all levels."

express himself in the language he naturally masters best, his own. It ensures that everyone is equal before the law. Kosovo's sinister legacy of ethnic conflict and the lack of readiness to overcome it, is still a huge obstacle in this respect and blocks its way to becoming one of the fascinating regions in Europe where this is nowadays a common day practice, such as Suedtirol/ Alto Adige in Italy, Bruxelles/Brussel in Belgium or Schleswig/Slesvig in Denmark and Germany.

Much is talked and read about parallel structures. However, Kosovo Serbs will

remain to see them as a necessity, as long as they do not feel secure and equally treated within Kosovo structures. That this is not widely understood is surprising, especially given the existence of Kosovo Albanian parallel structures not too long ago.

As in many other fields – the Standards do not impose anything on Municipal Governments; rather they just specifying what needs to be achieved to improve the lives of all people in Kosovo as well as initiate talks on final status. They are a roadmap for Kosovo towards a normal European existence

Women’s participation is our standard

Standards for Kosovo represent the roadmap for Kosovo government officials and people of Kosovo. In every modern society, the role of women and women’s contribution to functioning democratic institutions is important and significant. According to the Standards, the civil service should be professional, impartial and accountable, representative of all communities in Kosovo and (should) include... a significant proportion of women.” In addition: “Women participate in the institutions of the PISG at rates that equal or exceed rates in the region and the interests of women are fully reflected in its policies and legislation.”

by Biserka Ivanovic, OSCE

Speaking about the significant proportion of women in decision- making bodies and their representation, the following text is a brief overview of Kosovo gender equality mechanisms. A Gender Equality Law, proposed by the Gender Equality Committee is now with the SRSG waiting to be signed and promulgated. Gender focal points are appointed in each Ministry. An Advisor on Gender Issues is attached to the Prime Minister’s office. On the local level, Municipal Gender Officers have been appointed in each municipality and Gender Equality Committees have been established in 15 out of 30 municipalities.

In 2003, gender equality stakeholders in Kosovo developed a National Action Plan with recommendations and actions that should be undertaken by different actors, including the Provisional Institutions of Self Government (PISG), in order to meet women’s concerns.

The International Convention on Elimination of all forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW) is a part of the Constitutional Framework. Gender sensitive applicable laws and regulations also form a part of Kosovo’s legislation. The ultimate responsibility for the fulfillment of gender-sensitive objectives lies with the PISG and other key actors.

International and local gender stakeholders work to support the good work that has been done so far in this field. The OSCE Mission in Kosovo ensured 30% representation for women in decision-making bodies with the election regulation which envisaged a quota system. Women in government can now have their say too and influence policy-making processes more pragmatically.

The OSCE Mission in Kosovo mainstreams gender equality and gender related issues into its projects, programs and strategic plans. Training activities also aim at increasing knowledge and to improve performance skills. Last year, OMiK’s Women’s Network (also supported by STAR Network and UNIFEM) jointly implemented a policy generation and advocacy campaign called “Political Parties Work for Women”. The campaign aimed at raising awareness about women’s concerns in every municipality in Kosovo. It also advocated and lobbied

for inclusion of women’s concerns into the Political Parties’ electoral platforms.

OSCE and UNIFEM worked together on supporting the establishment of Gender Equality Committees and capacity building of their members. It is envisaged that

both organizations will continue working with these bodies. OSCE will also continue to address women’s issues through its programs and various projects in years to come. Standards for Kosovo will offer guidelines for OSCE’s work in this respect.



The participation of women in government institutions shall equal or exceed rates in the region

Role of civil society on standard implementation plan for Kosovo

by Besnik Tahiri, OSCE

The Kosovo Standards Implementation Plan (KSIP) illustrates in detail the way how the Provisional Institutions of Self-Government (PISG) and the International Community (IC) shall reach certain objectives, which Kosovo society needs to meet in order to become a part of the European family. Accomplishment of the Standards involves and entails close co-operation of all governmental and non-governmental institutions in Kosovo as well as broader co-operation in the region, especially in light of the dialogue process with Serbia and Montenegro. The KSIP, almost in its entirety, requires full participation and constructive engagement of local and international interlocutors.

There are almost 2500 Non Governmental Organisations (NGOs) registered in Kosovo, and these NGOs can compete as a crucial partner in the complex process of the implementation of Standards. Civil society can play a crucial role in democracy building

and social building process.

Civil society in general is expected to play an influential role in reaching the Standards for Kosovo. Mainly, the broader public awareness on what the Standards mean should be created, particularly targeting youth and rural areas. One of the important tasks is to facilitate better interaction and interfacing on some key issues between the PISG and the IC. To ensure the credibility of the process, the constant communications with the public must be maintained, so that the public understands how "Standards" positively affect their lives. Parallel to that, local capacities for monitoring standards and integration process need to be strengthened. Civil society should provide some targeted capacity building support vis-à-vis obligations and actions resulting from Standards to local and central government bodies.

The events of 17-20 March showed that the involvement of the civil society actors should

intensify and their efforts need to concentrate on activities which could increase mutual respect in society. Civil society is a key in the process of confidence building between all communities. Inclusiveness of non-governmental institutions is essential for building democracy in Kosovo; the fulfilment of Standards is a pre-condition for the start of a discussion regarding the final status in 2005. Civil society actors can be engaged to monitor and assess the progress; it is important to facilitate this process especially by introducing the model of partnership.

Civil society, especially local think-tanks and specialized institutes, should design its programmes in reference to the KSIP and look for partnerships with the PISG, in particular when it comes to Standards such as Functioning of Democratic Institutions, Dialogue and Regional Cooperation.

Election-related activities such as information about the voting system and awareness raising materials (for example posters, leaflets, publications) can support public meetings or roundtable discussions between local institutions, civil society and political parties. On the other hand, voter mobilization and civic advocacy could be a very important component for participation in elections. Such efforts could be increased to include different training programmes on voter education, and offer more technical training on how to vote.

Cooperation between international specialized institutes and local think tanks, when it comes to capacity building programmes in particular when they are focused on dialogue and negotiations skills, can be a useful tool for the PISG representatives as the Standards require also this kind of skills.

Youth (particularly first time voters), women (particularly young women) and other communities can be considered as a focus target group. Different youth NGOs and representatives should become more active and responsible in a pluralistic and democratic Kosovo. These groups can raise youth understanding of basic democratic principles and improve their positive participation in the process of building participatory governance. This is a way to counter political manipulation.

To conclude, without full engagement of civil society, especially when it comes to topics such as transparency and accountability, it will be difficult to reach the Standards for Kosovo.



The almost 2,500 registered NGOs in Kosovo can play a crucial role in the democracy building process.

Let's talk...



...about Koro